

## URBAN-RURAL MIGRATION OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TWO SELECTED STATES IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated reason for Urban-Rural Migration (URM) of Senior Secondary School Students (SSSS) in two selected states in Nigeria. Three research question and two null hypotheses guided the study. Three instruments and 192 respondents (96 each from Benue and Enugu states and 48each from Urban and rural schools) were drawn using a non probability-convenient sampling technique. The study found that the main purpose of URM of SSSS was to write Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE) and West African Secondary School Examination (WASSCE), where examination monitoring and supervision are poor. It was recommended that Senior Secondary Schools (SSSS) examiners should be more vigilant in monitoring and supervising examinations in rural areas. Implication is that Nigerian governments' inability to provide necessary infrastructure in rural schools makes them vulnerable for perpetuating examination malpractices.

**KEYWORDS:** Urban-Rural Migration (URM; Examination Malpractices, Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE) and West African Secondary School Examination (WASSCE), Examination Monitoring and Supervision, Senior Secondary School Students (SSSS)

### INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Rural urban migration is a common phenomenon, but when one hears of Rural Urban Migration (URM) it sounds strange and keeps one wondering the reason for this. In recent years, it has become common to hear of, and to see Senior Secondary School students (SSSS) migrating from urban to rural areas. In this regard verbal speculations corroborated by printed media insinuated that the Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE) and West African Secondary School Examination (WASSCE) might be fraught with malpractices. Whereas such insinuations are of national scale from anecdotal records, that of Benue and Enugu states gave the researchers a deep-rooted concern that led to this study with a view to empirically verifying the verity of the speculations. This study, therefore, investigated urban-rural migration of SSS students.

It also tried to find out the extent school climate influenced the URM of SSSS. School climate refers to a set of measurable properties of the school environment that are perceived by the people who live and study in it; and which influences their behaviors. Studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between school climate and students' behavior in terms of stress, work or study commitment, absenteeism and participation (Rose, Douglas, Griffin & Linsley,

2002). School climate includes students' perception of their study environment. It, therefore, represents the individual students' grasp of the conditions, factors and events that occur in the school which influence their motivation and behavior. School climate in this study refers to the school factors including school environment; leadership behaviors of the principal; parents/guardians' involvement in the education of their wards, peer influence, teachers' classroom management, relationships among members of the school micro and macro communities that can result to the URM of the SSSS. The study investigated the extent to which school climate influenced the SSSS URM in Benue and Enugu states.

Migration is the physical movement of people from one locality to another, usually in a group for the purpose of permanent or semi-permanent residence across a political boundary (National Geographic Society, 2005; Resources Lexicon, 2005; Human Migration, 2007). Migration is equally conceptualized as movement from one territory to another seasonally, annually, periodically, or permanently. It may be spontaneous, forced, impelled, free and planned; and could be of internal, external, or interregional character (Answers Co-operation, 2010). Several **push** and **pull** environmental, political, economic, cultural, educational or religious factors may be responsible for migration. In this study, migration is construed as the movement of Senior Secondary School students from urban schools to rural schools for the purpose of SSCE/WASSCE.

### **Purpose of Study**

This study investigated reasons for URM of SSSS and the influence of school climate on URM of SSSS in the selected states in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the incidence of URM of SSSS students in Benue and Enugu States?
- What are the purposes of URM of SSSS?
- To what extent does the school climate influence URM of SSSS

### **Hypotheses**

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the purposes URM of SSSS in Benue and Enugu States.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the extant school climate influence URM of SSSS in Benue and Enugu States.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

A descriptive research survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Benue and Enugu States in Northern Central and Eastern States of Nigeria respectively. The states are also known for their transformation agenda for their secondary schools.

### **Population**

The population comprised of all SSS 3 students, all teachers of SSS 3 students and all the principals in public and private schools in Benue and Enugu states.

## **Sampling and Sampling Technique**

Using non probability-convenient or accidental sampling technique, a total sample of 12 Senior Secondary Schools were selected from the two states (three each from urban and rural areas in Benue and Enugu States). The choice of this technique is because the population was not known and because the non-probability approaches are more suitable for in-depth qualitative research in which the focus is often to understand complex social phenomena (Marshall 1996; Small 2009) which in this case is the urban rural migration of SSS students. From each school, 10 students were drawn, giving a total of 120 students; (60 students each from Benue and Enugu states) Five teachers from each of the schools, giving a total of 50 teachers, 25 each from Benue and Enugu States and one principal from each school, giving a total of 12 principals, six each from Benue and Enugu States were drawn. On the whole, 192 respondents were sampled and used for the study.

## **Instruments for Data Collection**

Two instruments were used for this study - a 22-item researchers-designed Students Urban-Rural Migration School Climate Questionnaire (SURMSCQ) and a focus Group Discussion Guide. The SURMSCQ has two sections. Section A is designed to collect the respondents' personal data while Section B had two clusters. Cluster 1 was designed as a structured interview schedule to obtain data from the principals on the number of SSSS students in their schools from 2005 to 2009 and the number of candidates who registered for SSCE/WASSCE during the same period. It also collected information on the purposes of the URM of SSSS. Cluster 2 has 11 items placed on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), A (Agree), D (Disagree) and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively, for eliciting information on purposes of the migration. Cluster 3 equally contains 11 items on 4-point rating scale, of Very Large Extent (VSE), Large Extent (LE), Small Extent (SE) Very Small Extent (VSE), weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively, for eliciting information on extent to which school climate influences URM of the SSSS.

The interview schedule which is part of the SURMSCQ has three structured questions based on the research questions while the Focus Group Discussion Guide has two topics based on research questions 2 & 3.

## **Validation and Reliability of the Instruments**

The instruments were face validated by two experts in Educational Administration and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They were trial-tested on 20 SSSS, two principals and five teachers from two secondary schools in Anambra State. Using Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis, the internal consistency was obtained, resulting into an overall Reliability Coefficient value of 0.79 for the SURMSCQ.

## **Administration of the Instruments**

The researchers with two research assistants administered and retrieved 160 (83.3%) of the completed SURMSCQ. from the respondents. The Focus Group Discuses Guide was moderated by the two researchers and two research assistant for Benue and Enugu States each. The discussion was done in the selected schools after obtaining due permission from the school authorities. The 10 students selected by random sampling were very cooperative and contributed tremendously. Many more students later joined in the discussion and freely expressed their opinions. With their permission the discussion was tapped. The structured interview which is part of the questionnaire was completed by the principals who also explained verbally to the researchers their own experiences on URM of SSSS. They also supplied the data on incidence of the URM of SSSS.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative non parametric statistics were used for answering the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion mean OF 2.50 was used for the research question 1 is 2.50. This implies that any item with a mean of 2.50 and above is regarded as a reason URM of SSSS and any item with a mean below 2.50 is not regarded as a reason for sure. Real limits of numbers were used in determining the decision level in research question 3 as follows:

**Table 1**

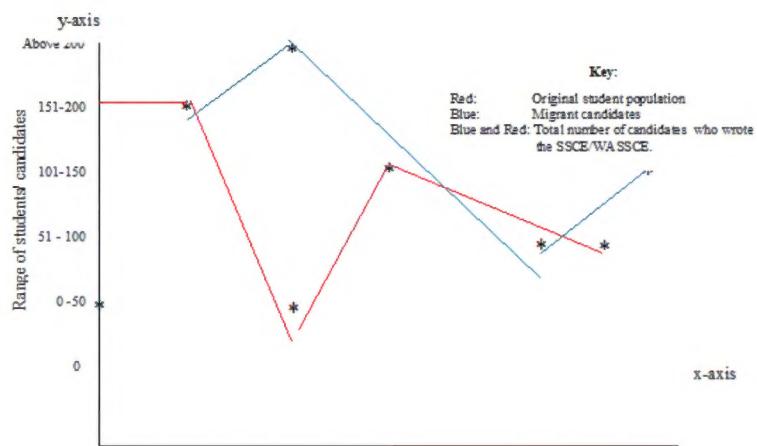
Mean Range	Decision Level
3.04 – 4.50 and above	Very Large Extent (VLE)
2.05 -2.04	Large Extent (LE)
1.05 -2.04	Small Extent (SE)
0 – 1.04	Very Small Extent (VSE)

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in the two graph and four tables below:

**Table 2: Frequency Count of the Incidence of URM of SSSS- 2007 to 2012 in Benue and Enugu States**

No. of Students	SSSS Population/No of Schools	Exam Candidates / Nto. of Schools
1-50	4	0
51-100	10	9
101-150	6	11
151-200	2	2
Above 200	0	4



**Figure 1: Linear Graph on Incidence of URM of SSSS; 2005 – 2010 in Benue and Enugu States**

Table 1n and Figure 1 shows that between 2008 and 2012, one to fifty student populations was recorded in four rural schools while no rural school had less than 50 candidates for SSCE/WASSCE during the same period. About 51 to 100 student populations were recorded in 10 schools and the same number registered for SSCE/WASSCE nine schools during the same period while six schools recorded between 101 and 150 student populations, eleven schools registered the same number during the same period. Again, two schools had between 101 and 150 student populations while two schools also registered between 101 and 150 candidates for the external examinations. Four schools registered

over 200 candidates for the external examinations but no school registered such a number for normal school population during the period. Figures 1and 2 (graph and bar chart respectively, on students population in rural schools for SSCE/WASSCE candidates from 2008 to 2012 in Benue and Enugu State schools, show that the number of candidates who registered in the rural area for writing the SSCE/WASSCE were more than the normal student population in the rural schools.

**Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Purposes of URM of SSSS**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals			Teachers			Students			Decision Level	
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec. Level	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec. Level	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec. Level		
1	Writing Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE/NECO).	2.90	0.84	Accept	3.14	0.88	Accept	3.03	0.86	Accept	3.02	Accept
2	They believe that rural schools have less supervision during WASSCE/NECO examination(s).	2.90	0.84	Accept	2.88	0.84	Accept	3.06	0.87	Reject	2.94	Accept
3	The cost of WASSCE/NECO registration is less.	2.10	0.72	Reject	2.08	0.72	Reject	1.50	0.60	Reject	1.89	Not accept
4	Students pass WASSCE/NECO with ease at the rural schools.	1.60	0.63	Accept	2.78	0.83	Accept	1.85	0.67	Reject	2.52	Accept
5	The schools in the rural areas are viewed as "business centres".	3.20	0.89	Accept	2.92	0.85	Accept	2.05	0.71	Reject	2.72	Accept
6	The examination halls in rural secondary schools are usually grossly inadequate and so over-crowding is permitted.	2.70	0.81	Accept	3.12	0.88	Accept	2.93	0.85	Accept	2.91	Accept
7	Urban-rural migration of senior secondary school students makes rural school population swell up and keeps the school going without extinction.	2.90	0.84	Accept	3.00	0.86	Accept	3.05	0.87	Accept	2.98	Accept
8	Rural schools are usually centres for paid mercenaries of examination malpractice.	2.90	0.84	Accept	3.08	0.87	Accept	2.96	0.86	Accept	2.98	Accept
9	Urban-rural migration of senior secondary school students has a lot of advantages to the rural communities.	2.90	0.84	Accept	3.04	0.87	Accept	2.71	0.81	Accept	2.88	Accept
10	Principals of the rural schools benefit from it.	2.40	0.77	Reject	2.78	0.83	Accept	3.02	0.86	Accept	2.73	Accept
11	Climate (weather) is more harsh in urban areas than rural areas	2.01	0.81	Reject	1.88	0.89	Reject	2.05	0.71	Reject	1.98	Not accept
N = 160												

Table 3 shows that the respondents accepted all the items except item 4 as the purposes of URM of SSSS. Also the table shows that while principals and teachers accepted that the rural schools are viewed as business centers, students rejected this view. The table equally shows that the principals rejected that they benefited from the URM of SSSS but teachers and students accepted this view.

**Table 4: Mean Ratings on the Extent of School Climate Influence on URM of SSSS**

S/N	To What Extent Do/Does /Are	Principals			Teachers			Students			Decision Level	
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec. Level	$\bar{X}$	SD	VLE	$\bar{X}$	SD	Dec. Level		
12	Examination conditions in the rural schools likely to be more favorable to candidates than in the urban schools in terms of supervision?	2.90	0.84	LE	3.10	0.87	VLE	3.01	0.75	LE	3.00	LE
13	Leadership behaviors of the principal encourage urban-rural migration.	2.10	0.72	LE	2.80	0.83	LE	1.98	0.70	SE	2.29	LE
14	Parents/guardians encourage urban-rural migration to help their wards to succeed at all costs.	3.10	0.87	LE	3.08	0.87	VLE	3.01	0.75	LE	3.06	VLE
15	Parents/guardians facilitate the migration of their wards by paying extra charges as demanded by those concerned.	2.80	0.83	LE	3.08	0.87	VLE	2.96	0.86	LE	2.94	LE
16	Students who may not want to migrate eventually do so because they want to be with their friends in the rural schools (peer group pressure).	2.10	0.72	LE	2.18	0.73	LE	1.90	0.68	SE	2.06	LE
17	Students force their fellow Senior Secondary School students to migrate from urban to rural schools.	1.90	0.68	SE	1.76	0.66	SE	1.78	0.66	SE	1.81	SE
18	Teachers' poor classroom management encourages urban-rural migration of Senior Secondary School students.	2.00	0.70	SE	1.78	0.66	SE	3.53	0.93	VLE	2.43	LE
19	Poor teacher-student relationship encourages urban-rural migration of senior secondary school students in urban schools.	2.60	0.80	LE	1.92	0.69	SE	2.93	0.85	LE	2.48	LE
20	Good principal-teacher relationship discourages migration of senior secondary school students rural schools.	2.90	0.84	LE	2.88	0.84	LE	3.03	0.86	LE	2.93	LE
21	The rural communities encourage urban-rural migration of senior secondary school students.	2.10	0.72	LE	1.94	0.69	SE	2.10	0.76	LE	2.04	LE
22	Environmental conditions(weather) in the urban areas induce urban-rural migration.	2.01	0.70	SE	1.96	0.80	SE	2.00	0.71	SE	1.99	SE
Grand means		2.22	SG	2.41	SE	2.51	LE	2.38	SE			

Table 4 shows that the total Grand Mean 2.45 is slightly below the criterion mean of 2.50 and the decision level is to a Large Extent. The table further shows that item 22 environmental conditions (weather) to a small extent influence urban-rural migration while all the other items (12-22) influence urban-rural migration to a Large Extent or Very Large Extent.

**Table 5: Summary of t-Test on the Difference between Purposes of URM of SSSS**

S/N	Group of Respondent	No	$\bar{X}$	Sd	df	f-Value	t-Value	Decision
1	Benue	96	2.88	0.84	94	1.8441	3.6219	Not significant
2	Enugu	96	2.61	0.79				

Table 5 shows that the t-cal, 1.84 is smaller than the t-table 3.62. The decision shows that the difference between the means is not significant. So the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the purpose of URM of SSSS on Benue and Enugu States is accepted

The data from the focus Group Discussion support the findings from the questionnaire that several factors contribute to the URM of SSSS, foremost among them is to go to a place where it will be easy to write and pass the SSCE and WASSECE. Most of them indicate that due to the difficulties and lack of infrastructures monitoring and supervision of the examinations are not very serious as in the urban areas. It was gathered that in some remote areas Student write the examinations with or without supervision and they cheat as much as they like with the collaboration of the school authorities who are usually well remunerated.

**Table 6: Summary of t-cal on the Difference between Purposes of URM of SSSS**

S/N	Group of Respondents	No	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	f-Value	t-Value	Decision
1	Benue	96	2.45	0.77	94	0.21146	2.0454	Not significant
2	Enugu	96	2.62	0.77				

Table 6 shows that the t-cal is 0.21 and tab 2.05 (t-tab is greater than the t-cal). The decision shows that the difference between the extent school climate influence URM of SSSS in Benue and Enugu is not significant and the mean is not significant. And so, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Summary of Findings

It was found that:

- The reason for the URM of SSSS in descending order of respondents' opinion were:
- Writing SSCE/WASSCE with ease, (3.03);
- Principals of the rural schools benefit from it (2.98);
- Examination halls in rural secondary schools were usually grossly inadequate and overcrowding fueled examination malpractice (2.98);
- Rural schools were usually centers for paid mercenaries for examination malpractices (2.98);
- Rural schools had less supervision during SSCE/WASSCE (2.94);

- Schools in the rural areas were seen as business/ miracle centers (2.72);
- More students pass SSCE/WASSCE with ease in rural schools (2.57)
- School climate influenced URM of SSSS to a Small Extent.
- There is no significant difference between the purposes of URM of SSSS and the extent to which school climate influenced URM of SSSS in Benue and Enugu States.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The results of the study show that several factors cause URM of SSSS which include: writing of SSCE/WASSCE; where these is less supervision and inadequate facilities making students to cheat and pass examinations with URM of SSSS also have several advantages to the schools and the rural community sustaining rural schools and perverting them from total extinction as well as providing economic benefits to the community during the period. However, the school climate has little to do with urban-rural migration. The hypotheses and interview corroborated the findings that there is no significant differences between the two states in the purposes of urban-rural migration of Senior Secondary School students; and that there is no significant difference with regard to the extent to which school climate influences urban-rural migration of SSS students in both states.

The study could not actually ascertain the rate of migration due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate data from the schools. However it is clear that students migrate from urban to rural areas where they can easily cheat during external examinations. Benue State government's reaction to urban-rural migration of Senior Secondary School Students (SSSS) as narrated by Tyav (2010: 1) who painted a scenario of an SSSS who was told by his guardian that he would transfer him from a village school to a secondary school in Makurdi, the Benue state capital. In utter surprise, the student simply told his benefactor that: "*you don't have love for me. When students in the final classes are moving to villages to pass their examinations, you are rather considering transferring me from the village to town.*" A plethora of studies show evidence of examination malpractices and inadequate conduct of the SSCE/WASSCE in secondary schools in Nigeria (Obagah, 2004; Oluwatayo, 2004;

Okwilagwe, 2004 and Idahosa, 2004). Other studies that tended to support urban-rural migration of youths for academic and economic reasons include (Oluwatayo, 2004; Gbemiga, 2005). Idahosa (2004) and Alutu & Aluede (2006) also found that inadequate materials and corrupt officials influenced examination malpractices in schools; and that examination malpractice is common in schools and difficult to eradicate.

These findings tend to support the views of (Eromosele, 2008 and 2010; Obagah, 2004 and the reports of Tyav, 2010; Iwuchukwu, 2009 and Oyedele, 2010) on the migration secondary school students to rural schools and the examination malpractice issues. They have inter alia commented on the challenges currently facing the educational system due to examination malpractices in various examination centers. On the realization that success or failure at SSCE/WASSCE makes or mars candidates' future, the SSS students may decide to embark on urban-rural migration in order to cheat in their examinations (a goal they consider more easily achievable in the rural schools than in urban schools). This implies that examination administration is apparently inadequate and less effective in the rural areas. Moreover, corrupt teachers and paid mercenaries thrive more at such centers in aiding and abetting examination malpractices. This action appeals to, and fulfils the yearning and aspiration of the SSCE/WASSCE candidates who are determined to

succeed by all means and at all costs, just like the student in Tyav, 2010 scenario already cited. This explains why some students decide not to write their SSCE/WASSCE in the urban schools they attended, preferring to register and write their examinations in schools where they consider their success guaranteed. If the examination ethics are adhered to strictly in the rural schools students will be compelled to stop cheating during examinations. This trend presupposes moral laxity in the conduct of examinations in the rural areas. It would take moral rebirth and rectitude on the part of the stakeholders to eradicate the examination malpractice syndrome in the educational system. This requires the synergy of all the stakeholders of the educational system in the society. More importantly, examination bodies such as West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) should be aware of this URM of SSSS and ensure that adequate preparations are made for examination administration, especially in rural areas.

### **Implications of the Study**

A situation where facilities are inadequate and monitoring officers and supervisors are lacking should be seriously looked into in rural areas. The findings of this study imply that time has come when educationists, planners and administrators should stop lip service paid to rural schools in terms of human and material resources. Where school climate is less favorable for academics, it encourages examination malpractice. Hence, every principal should ensure school climate that is favourable to academics, but unfavorable to examination malpractice to prevent URM.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The issue of urban-rural migration of SSCE/WASSCE candidates is becoming a challenge to educational planners, administrators as well as examiners. The standard of education is usually measured by the quality of examinations and their results. Where school results and examinations, more especially certificates, are neither credible nor authentic, it cannot be said to be a true picture of academic achievement. How can higher institutions and employers of labor ascertain the true caliber of candidates they need for the next stage of life among the secondary school graduates? This is, therefore, a problem to the entire educational system. This implies that the development of this nation is built on falsehood and could crash in due course.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- There should be further studies to find out the situation of URM in other parts of the country.
- Examiners should be aware of the increase of student population in rural areas during examinations and so make adequate arrangements for adequate human and material resources to enable proper administration of the examinations.
- Principals should adopt good leadership styles to discourage urban-rural migration.
- Well experienced and disciplined principals should be deployed to the rural areas and be motivated with special allowances for checking examination malpractice.
- Common well furnished examination centers should be established in every Local Government Area. Such common centers will prevent student migration and reduce examination malpractices.

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